

CLEAN COPY OF REPLACEMENT CLAIMSIN THE CLAIMS:

1. (twice amended) A ferrule comprising:

at least one optical fiber bore associated with a front surface and a rear surface of said ferrule;
first and second body portions extending at least partially between said surfaces and having respective widths, a juncture of said body portions comprising an interface in the form of a parting line on an exterior surface of the ferrule, said parting line extending longitudinally over a majority of the ferrule between said front surface and said rear surface, and said parting line defining an offset of at least about 50 microns between said first and second body portions.

18. (twice amended) A ferrule comprising:

at least one optical fiber bore extending from a front surface to a rear surface of said ferrule;
a shaft portion defining exterior surfaces of said ferrule, said exterior surfaces at least partially extending longitudinally between said front and rear surfaces; and
a width transition, said width transition extending longitudinally along a majority of said exterior surfaces of said ferrule shaft portion, said width transition comprising a width offset.

Please add the following new claims:

21. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 18 wherein the width transition is formed by a first ferrule body portion and a second ferrule body portion, the first body portion being defined to within a first tolerance, and the second body portion being defined to within a second tolerance that is larger than the first tolerance.

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22. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 21 wherein the second tolerance of said second ferrule body portion is at least two times larger than the first tolerance of said first ferrule body portion.

23. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 18 wherein the width transition is formed by a first ferrule body portion and a second ferrule body portion, the first and second body portions cooperate to define a ledge.

24. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 18 wherein the ferrule is a multifiber ferrule.

25. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 17 wherein the second tolerance of said second ferrule body portion is at least two times larger than the first tolerance of said first ferrule body portion.

26. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 25 wherein said first and second ferrule body portions are capable of being offset in a widthwise direction by up to a maximum offset, and wherein the first width of said first ferrule body portion is larger than the second width of said second ferrule body portion by at least the sum of the first tolerance, the second tolerance, and two times the maximum offset between said first and second ferrule body portions.

27. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 17 wherein the first and second ferrule body portions cooperate to define a ledge.

28. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 17 wherein the ferrule is a multifiber ferrule.

29. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 19 wherein the second tolerance is at least two times larger than the first tolerance.

30. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 19 wherein the two exterior surfaces cooperate to define a ledge.

31. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 19 wherein the ferrule is a multifiber ferrule.

32. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 20 wherein the second tolerance is at least two times larger than the first tolerance.

33. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 20 wherein the first and second body portions cooperate to define a ledge.

34. (new) A ferrule according to Claim 20 wherein the ferrule is a multifiber ferrule.